

Kinship Care Workgroup Benchmarking

*developed for Northern Virginia Kinship Care training

Jurisdiction: *Hampton, Virginia*

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1. What is your mission/goal/philosophy regarding kinship care services in your agency?

We emphasize a holistic family engagement philosophy related to kinship care services as part of our comprehensive Systems of Care approach. Our Systems of Care core values and beliefs include:

- Keeping children and families together is the best possible use of resources.
- Hampton partners with all who can support children and families' successful outcomes.
- We begin with outcomes not process.
- Families are the experts about their families.
- All stakeholder groups are accountable for positive outcomes for children and their families at home, school and in the community.
- Child centered, family focused and community based service delivery is the law and must be turned into actions.
- We will do **whatever it takes** to support the success of children and families.
- Trying hard is not good enough.

2. Who is your target population (i.e. Who do you serve? How do you define kinship care?)

We serve families where the children are at high-risk of removal from the care of their primary family unit due to abuse and neglect and/or complex behaviors. Kinship care is defined as utilizing family and family resources including "fictive kin" to develop the best possible home for all children living in Hampton.

Our fundamental belief is that foster care should be a "last resort" and that children must be raised in families. We also believe that children services should be provided in the least restrictive, most community like setting possible.

3. How is your kinship care program structured (do you have a specialized unit, where is it housed, where do referrals come from)?

Hampton does not have a formalized kinship program. Rather, we have a family engagement philosophy that infuses processes and procedures. Kinship foster care is rarely used. Diversion

to kinship caregivers is heavily used by CPS and supported with services funded by CSA. CSA oversees child welfare and takes the lead in orchestrating the path for kinship care.

Typically, Hampton CSA and DSS do not develop specific programs but develops individualized and unique approaches to support each child and family.

A) Do you partner with non profits?

The Hampton child serving system has a long history of partnering with non-profits and other private providers to create customized services. CSA also partners with the other public agencies in the development and implementation of all projects. We are guided by CPMT and the Stakeholder group which includes DSS, the court, private providers, schools, the community services board, etc. The Stakeholder group, facilitated by Judge Jay E. Dugger, develops innovative practices that links services and supports for children, adolescents and families.

B) If so, who takes the lead in regards to service provision?

Hampton DSS takes the lead in service delivery with funding and practice oversight from CPMT and FAPT. FAPT serves as the Child and Family Team insuring individualized service approaches. CPMT oversees quality assurance provided by a public/private partnership.

4. What services/supports are provided to kinship caregivers?

Services and supports provided to kinship caregivers include, but are not limited to:

- Case management for informal kinship care families is provided by the CSB.
- Family Decision Making is utilized as an organizing and implementation structure for insuring the best possible plan.
- Teaching Parent program – provides stipend, service/supports including case management, respite, FAPT support, crisis intervention, kinship navigation assistance, 1:1 training, Personal Care Assistants and customized support.
- Parent & Child Together (PACT) program – Case management is provided through a private agency. Children and caregivers are placed together in a “Host Home” which provides parent-to-parent role modeling and customized management. Case management is provided through a private agency.
- Personal Care Assistants – Provide in-home respite, mentoring, or other services needed to help keep the family together and functioning. Services are provided by in-home service providers.
- Intensive Intervention Services – Provide in-home support, crisis response and a “do whatever it takes” philosophy. Service providers utilize an “unconditional care” approach developed by Karl Dennis is provided by in-home service providers.
- Respite – relatives can provide respite, approved foster families are also used.

5. How are families connected to the services they need? To what extent is access to the services streamlined and how?

Kinship services are integrated with other services. Hampton utilizes the Family Assessment and Planning Team to insure services are integrated and streamlined. Case management for informal kinship care families is provided by CSB. CPS and CSA phone lines are used for Intake.

6. How are services funded?

The Comprehensive Services Act is the primary source of funding for kinship services. Please see the Annie E. Casey Strategic Consulting Group 2008 report entitled “Getting the Most out of CSA: A Guide to Hampton, VA Best Practices” for a comprehensive review of the Hampton practice and fiscal approach to CSA.

The Teaching Parent Program is funded primarily through the Foster Care Prevention category of CSA funding. Other potential CSA funding categories include Special Education funds and non-mandated funds.

Whenever appropriate and possible Hampton utilizes Medicaid funding for services provided to families receiving kinship care support.

A.) What kind of financial support is there for kinship caregivers?

Because Hampton believes that each family presents with unique needs, FAPT and CPMT approves an array of interventions and supports that are sometimes financial in nature. Hampton works very closely with kinship families to pursue various types of financial assistance that will continue beyond CSA service needs. They include, but are not limited to TANF, SSI, and Child Support payments.

7. Do you have any measurable outcomes?

The Hampton Family and Assessment Planning Team has conducted an annual outcomes report since 2008 that measures the success of all youth served by CSA in the domain areas of home, school, and community. Hampton has not measured the success of youth in Kinship care specifically.

8. Did you encounter any barriers or gaps to providing kinship services? If so, what were they and how did you address them?

We believe that a potential systemic barrier across Virginia and the Country is the belief that supporting family members is a separate service or a unique service versus the belief shared by Hampton’s Child Serving leadership and providers that Family Decision Making and the utilization of CSA are the fabric for actualizing our core values and beliefs.

9. How do you find (informal) kinship families (e.g. outreach/marketing)?

We have not found a need to provide marketing efforts to find kinship (informal) families. The openness of the Child and Family Team (FAPT) and Family Decision Making process, as well as the utilization of strengths based facilitators has opened families to identify their own potential kinship supports. We have coupled this openness to reveal relatives with the process of Family Finding, as trained by Kevin Campbell.